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## NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

### NOTE ON ARISTOTLE'S *ETHICS* ii. 3. 5. 1104 b 21

δι' ἡδονὰς δὲ καὶ λύπας φαῦλαι γίνονται, τῷ διώκειν ταύτας καὶ φεύγειν, ἥ ἄς μὴ δεῖ ἢ ὅτε οὐ δεῖ ἢ ὥς οὐ δεῖ ἢ ὅσαχῶς ἄλλως ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου διορίζεται τὰ τοιαῦτα. κτλ.

In the *Classical Review* for June 1913, pp. 113 ff., Mr. J. Cook Wilson discusses the force of ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου in the passage, the problem for him being whether λόγος here means "reason," or, as many editors take it, "definition," "rule," "formula." To the interpretation, "definition," or "rule," he rightly objects, after others, that the definition or formula has not yet been given. Accordingly with the aid of many parallel passages he decides that the meaning is Reason, nearly, if not quite, in the sense in which ὀρθὸς λόγος is used frequently throughout the *Ethics*. That λόγος may sometimes be a virtual synonym of ὀρθὸς λόγος needed no proof. But in assuming that to be its meaning here, Mr. Wilson overlooks, I think, another characteristic Aristotelian use of λόγος which is the true key to the passage. Aristotle<sup>1</sup> not infrequently opposes λόγος or κατὰ τὸν λόγον as "a priori" to "a posteriori" reasoning based on the facts, or induction, εἰσαγωγή, or perception, αἴσθησις.

By "a priori" I mean, of course, not metaphysically a priori, but something apparent to logical, verbal, or dialectical inspection, without further investigation of the concrete facts. In many such passages the λόγος in question is the definition, and the a priori method is simply deduction from the definition. These cases we may disregard: cf., for example, *de partibus animalium* 653 b, 22; *pol.* 1326 a, 29.

But in others the thing that is apparent by or through λόγος is a generalization, an alternative, a classification, or indefinite list of categories and distinctions, and that is the case here. Mere a priori logical or dialectical reflection tells us at once that wrong action may be wrong either substantively in the content of the act or in respect of time (or place or quantity, and so forth), and all the other distinctions which the reasoning faculty suggests to us. The turn of phrase ὅσαχῶς ἄλλως, etc., is in itself, perhaps,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *de generat. anim.* 760 b, 27; 729 b, 8: κατὰ τε δὴ τὸν λόγον οὕτω φαίνεται καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἔργων; *de part. animal.* 666 a, 18; *de generat. animal.* 740 a, 4; *de generat. et corrupt.* 336 b, 15; *de juvent. et senect.* 468 a, 20; *de part. animal.* 646 a, 29; *phys.* 210 b, 8; 262 a, 17; *de part. animal.* 653 b, 22, etc.

a sufficient warning that this is the meaning. For this or something like this is Aristotle's ordinary way of summing up in *παράλειψις* the categories and other obvious and indispensable logical distinctions which he does not care to enumerate in full, cf. *Met.* 1005 b, 19: τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ ἅμα ὑπάρχειν τε καὶ μὴ ὑπάρχειν ἀδύνατον τῷ αὐτῷ καὶ κατὰ τὸ αὐτό· καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα προσδιορισαίμεθ' ἂν, ἔστω προσδιορισμένα πρὸς τὰς λογικὰς δυσχερείας. *Met.* 1030 a, 18: καὶ γὰρ τὸ τί ἐστὶν ἓνα μὲν τρόπον σημαίνει τὴν οὐσίαν καὶ τὸ τὸδε τι, ἄλλον δὲ ἕκαστον τῶν κατηγορουμένων, ποσόν, ποιὸν καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα τοιαῦτα; *Met.* 1026 a, 36 ff; *Top.* 146 b, 20; πάλιν ἐπ' ἐνίων εἰ μὴ διώρικε τοῦ πόσον ἢ ποῖον ἢ ποῦ ἢ κατὰ τὰς ἄλλας διαφοράς, οἷον φιλότιμος ὁ ποίας καὶ ὁ πόσης ὀρεγόμενος τιμῆς. Observe in the last passage the purely logical connotation of διώρικε. I would not press this argument too hard, for the verb may presumably be used of a concrete ethical decision or determination, though Mr. Wilson gives no example. But that its normal use relates to precise dialectical and logical distinctions is abundantly apparent from *Met.* 1005 b, 29, already quoted, and from *Top.* 130 b, 24, 131 b, 6, 10, 14–15, etc.

The phrase *διορίζεται τὰ τοιαῦτα*, then, refers, not to the separate, concrete judgments of right reason which direct the impulses of the good man right in particular cases, but to the indeterminate list of relevant distinctions apparent to the logical reason. This appears further from the language used by Aristotle himself two lines below, which is in the style of the passages from the *Topics* and evidently implies the logical and definitional point of view: οὐκ εὖ δέ, ὅτι ἀπλῶς λέγουσιν, ἀλλ' οὐκ ὡς δεῖ καὶ ὡς οὐ δεῖ, καὶ ὅτε, καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα προστίθεται. It is also implied by the language of the ancient commentators, who speak only of the distinctions and ignore the λόγος altogether, which they could hardly do if they conceived it to be the ὀρθὸς λόγος of instinctively right ethical decisions.

Heliodorus, for example, writes, *paraphras. in Eth. Nicomach.* 1104 b, p. 30, l. 20: ἀλλὰ ἀπὸ τῆς ἡδονῆς καὶ τῆς λύπης αἱ φαῦλαι γίνονται ἕξεις, δηλαδὴ τοῦ διώκειν τὴν ἡδονὴν ὥσπερ οὐ δεῖ, καὶ ὅτε οὐ δεῖ, καὶ πάλιν φεύγειν τὴν λύπην ὅτε οὐ δεῖ, καὶ ὡς οὐ δεῖ καὶ ὅπου οὐ δεῖ· καὶ ὅσαι ἄλλαι περιστάσεις πονηρὰν ποιούσι τὴν ζήτησιν τῆς ἡδονῆς ἢ τὴν φυγὴν τῆς λύπης.

The reason here is not, then, the ὀρθὸς λόγος or right reason of ethics, but the dialectical reason that notes categories, distinctions, classifications. It is undoubtedly true that from the metaphysical point of view Aristotle is not always able to keep them apart in the theory of the ethics. But such ultimate metaphysical difficulties would not warrant us in confounding plain, practical distinctions in his ordinary terminology.

It is interesting to observe that while nearly all editors known to me make unnecessary difficulties about the passage, the translations of Williams and Weldon instinctively give the right meaning. Williams renders: "the various forms of error that are logically conceivable."